Drawing 1 /65/

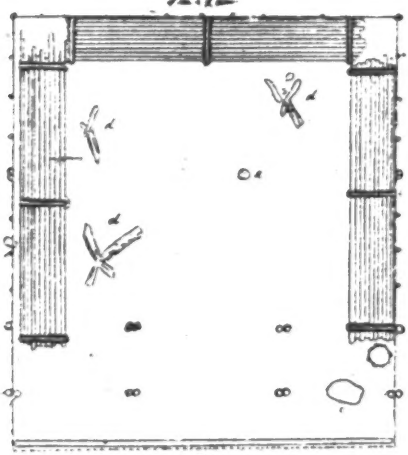

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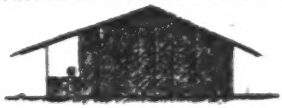
Fig. 27a. Drawing 1. Ground Plan of a Meeting House in Majo (Schumu Family): a, main post; b, skin drum; c, whetstone; d, fireplaces.

Drawing 2. Side view.



Drawing 2

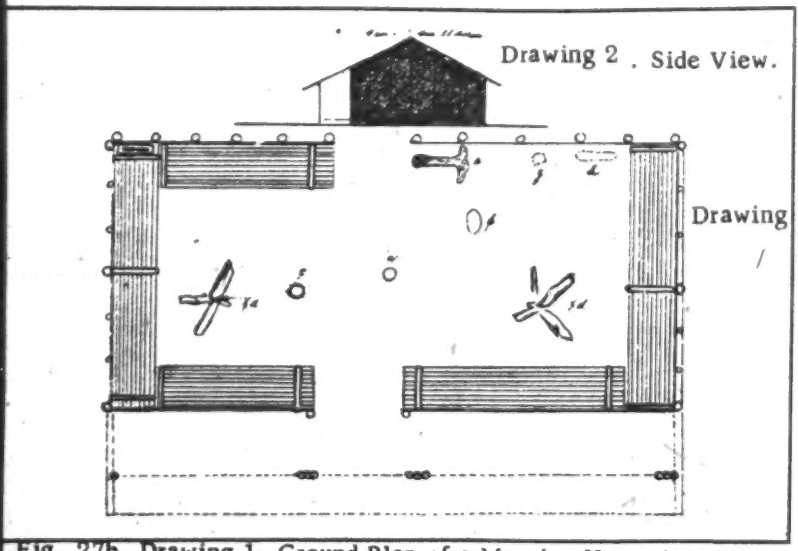


Fig. 27b. Drawing 1. Ground Plan of a Meeting House in Mbă (Essákunan Family): a, main post; b, forge; c, bellows; d, nets for wild game (c and d are hanging); e, anvil (stone); f, fireplaces; g, seat (tree stump); h, wooden drum.

344 the lengthened pin of the back legs.
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In some meeting houses the front legs project to form a semi-
[531] circle which covers up the narrow sides of the head rests. The outer surface of these semicircles is either carved to look like a face or else incised and provided with decorative surfaces which are painted red and white (Fig. 29). /Fig. 28 appears here in the original text./ /67/

344 Next to the benches, the most important part of the furnishings
354 of the meeting house consists of a number of logs which are placed together to form a fireplace (see Fig. 27). During the day the fire burns constantly, and during the night the logs are placed together so skillfully that the fire often keeps going until the next morning. /Fig. 29 appears here in the original text./ The importance of the cheering fire in the tropics is greater than one might believe; not only does it serve as a protection against the frequently severe morning chill and warm the room on days when the weather is rainy and cold, but it is also the only means of protection against
[137] the exceedingly annoying sand flies, Culicoides (afi,ge), tiny, scarcely visible insects whose sting causes an unpleasant itch like that of stinging nettles.

344 For the rest, the furnishings of the meeting house consist only
353 of such items as drums (wooden and skin drums), a whetstone, and,
352 suspended from the roof, the large hunting net which the inhabitants use communally on drives. In some cases I also found gun racks (ekob e nga), Figure 30, which are attached to the wall in the same way as we attach clothes hooks. Guns are placed on these racks so they are handy in case of a sudden attack. Another form of this rack (Fig. 31), likewise not common, consists of a board which is pointed at the bottom and provided with a hole at the top. This gun rack (efa[k] -e-nga) is planted in the ground in front of the meeting house. The butt end of the rifle is placed on the ground and the barrel is put in the hole in the board.

344 The skulls of hunted animals are frequently kept in the meeting
353 house as hunting trophies. Either they are held under the roof mats by means of poles, or they can be seen lying around on the roof; only large skulls, like those of elephants, are sometimes placed in front of the house. /Fig. 30 appears here in the original text./

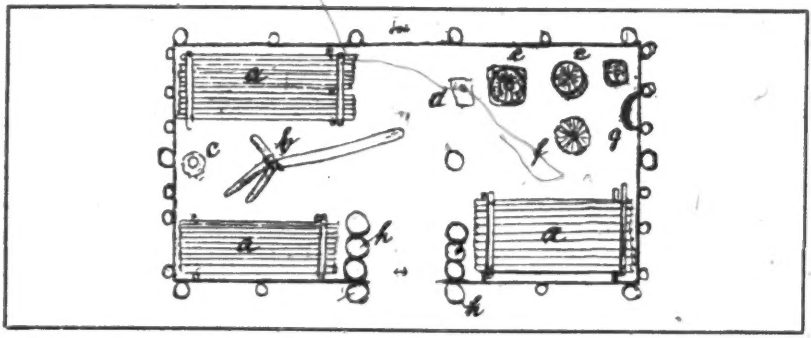

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Fig. 37. Ground Plan of a Pangwe Dwelling.
a, sleeping benches; b, fireplace (kitchen); c, pot with water; d, grindstone; e, baskets; f, bundle of maize cobs; g, hens' nest; h, door posts.

like the toys of a gigantic child that have just been finished by a giant toy dealer and are placed on the clean earth as though on a gigantic table. There are others in which one actually finds not a single house which does not let in the rain in torrents, not a single house whose walls are still standing straight and which does not provide entry for nocturnal reptiles between its walls and the ground. The reader should consider the significance of the name of the village of Ebualebambe ("tumble-down village") which, indeed, as I saw, did full justice to its name. 342 [103]

Whether the houses are carefully built or not, they always look depressed because they are too low in relation to their length, which seems even greater /73/ /Fig. 37 appears here in the original text/ than it actually is because of the way the houses are arranged in rows. One gets the same impression when one goes inside; on the average it is so low that one can stand in it only in a bent position for fear of coming into painful contact with the roof or the household utensils hanging from it. It is rare indeed that one can stand upright on one of the low sleeping benches without bumping his head.

As in the case of the meeting house, the interior of the dwelling (Fig. 37) has a single room which the Pangwe divides into atûm a nkiai and atûm akui, that is to say, into a western "room" (on a lower level) and an eastern "room" (on a higher level) which are to the left and right of the door. Figure 38 gives a view of the interior of a Fang hut. In this illustration one side wall and the right

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Fig. 38. A Dwelling of the Fang.
The right half of the front wall and one side wall have been removed for a view of the interior.

342 half of the front wall have been removed in order to provide a full view.

The four corners or at least three of them are occupied by
342 sleeping benches (Fig. 37 a) which are constructed exactly like
352 the benches of the meeting houses. The distance between the
353 head and foot rest, however, is only about three quarters body length, so it is necessary to lie on them with one's legs drawn up. The sleeping benches extend to the door posts and thus take up most of the room in the house. On one of the narrow sides and
354 between two sleeping benches is the fireplace (Figure 37 b), that is, a few logs placed together and serving both as a hearth and a stove. Over the fireplace is attached a device for drying and storing food and dishes which is put together in the following manner (Fig. 39). A frame covered with plaited raffia strips is laid over the door posts (a) and two forked sticks driven into the corners. This is the "pot loft," akán e mvé (c); one can usually see a number of pots and a clay water bottle on it. Other things, which even for the Negro cannot be designated as "valuable possessions," /74/ /Fig. 38 appears here in the original text/ are also found there, such as banana bowls, maize spindles, to whose use I shall return later, and so forth. Under the pot loft hangs the drying loft or "ground-nut loft," akán owŭnŏ (d). As the name indicates, this loft

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Fig. 43. Resin Lamp, Fang.

Fig. 42. Dirt Shovel for Cleaning the Meeting House, Ntum.

372 A few words should be said about lighting. In the houses,
354 which, as we have seen, are windowless and hence quite dark,
the hearth fire /Fig. 43 appears here in the original text/ is at
the same time a much needed source of light. As the Pangwe re-
[113] late in their legends, it was Mode-Sama, one of the first human
beings, who fetched fire (nduăn) from God (Sama); according to
other versions, the fire was given to him by God, and since Mode's
time the fire has not been extinguished. This useful element is
carried from one house to another and, when worst comes to
worst, from one village to another. The Pangwe does not need
to rekindle his fire, since it burns all day in the meeting house
where it serves as a protection against cold, moisture, and sand
flies, while in the dwellings it is kept going day and night for
cooking and heating purposes. When the women go to the planta-
[192] tions, the logs are so carefully arranged (for this action alone,
there are four different expressions!) that they continue to glow;
or the youngest daughter may be given the task of guarding the
vestal altar. In case the fire should actually go out in one house,
fire is obtained from a neighboring house, and it is only in ex-
ceptional cases that a smaller village has no fire. In such an
emergency fire is sent for from the nearest settlement.

373 Better lighting than the hearth fire is provided by the torch
light with which /80/ /Fig. 44 appears here in the original text/
the village square is illuminated at night when, for instance,
dances are held. The flickering of the torches causes the strange
and wild movements of the dancers to appear even more fantastic
than they really are. The torches are composed of dried stalks
[82a] of the cardamom Aframomum alboviolaceum K. Sch. (adzŏm;
stalk, kō'mō IV Fang, kŭŭ'me IV Ntum), Plate 21 in Section 11
/Vol. 2/, or finely spliced raffia stalk strips (ekă'ba), which —
when they are well dried — burn very brightly but, on the other
hand, are rather rapidly consumed.

373 The finest but an infrequently used source of light at festivi-
354 ties or other events in the village square is the resin lamp (otu =
82a resin), Figure 43, a little tub of bark containing the fragrant resin
314 of the Anacardiacea Canarium schweinfurthii Engl. (1) (abê Ntum,
obê Fang; resin = otu).

1. According to the communication of Doctor Mildbraed who has likewise collected this tree.

262 In addition to the spices, the Pangwe use oil as an additive for their food. The oil is obtained from the oil palm Elaeis guineensis L. (alĕn) and the Mimusops djave (Lan.) Engl. (adźăb), but it is extracted so rarely that its use in the kitchen is far secondary to its use for the care of the skin. For this reason I shall discuss the extraction of oil when I come to speak of skin care.

●354 The kitchen of the Pangwe woman is located, as we have already seen, in the house under the suspension loft. There is no actual hearth in it; among the Mwai this is represented by three rocks, but for the rest the pot which is always without legs is placed on a potsherd or on the skillfully arranged logs of the fire. If at any time there is more than usual to be cooked, for instance, after a successful elephant hunt, the daily fireplace is too small, and a second one is built behind the house.

313 For cooking -- as every little Pangwe girl knows -- three things are necessary: wood, water, and fire. There is never any shortage of wood; every day the housewife brings the necessary logs from the plantation (Fig. 51). Water is likewise available in great quantities; it merely has to be taken from the river in calabashes (ndŏk IV) or -- among the Ntum and Okak -- in earthenware water flasks (Fig. 92a), Pangwe esŭ gă (hence the name sŭ k, an imitation of the gurgling sound made by the water as it is poured in; hence also a-sŏk "waterfall"). We discussed the fire in the previous section.

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412 252 The kitchen utensils of the woman are very simple. The grindstone (akŏk) and the little round rubbing stone (ngŏk IV) that goes with it are found everywhere. The grindstone is irregularly flat, scoured smooth by the rubbing done on it, and it usually lies on the ground on which the woman kneels in front of the stone she works. Among the Mwai, who are somewhat more advanced in the art of cooking anyway, the stone is placed on four small posts like a table, a fact which considerably "raises" it in appearance. Groundnuts, ngon, and so forth are rubbed to a powder by rolling the rubbing stone back and forth on the grindstone. The same purpose is served by an almost round wooden plate which has the shape of a stemmed leaf with raised edges (evĭn-ndŏk, efeĭ-ndŏk); it is used for the kernels of the Irvingia barteri Hook. f. (andŏ k; fruit, ndŏ k IV), Figure 93; the grinder used with this plate is a hard fruit (asŏ k), round as a ball.